

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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RSR-01 /082 W

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R 271030Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7397

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PK

SUBJECT: OLD CAMPAIGNER CASTS LOT WITH ASGHAR
KHAN'S TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL

REF: KARACHI 1302

1. AT JULY 26 KARACHI PRESS CONFERENCE, SPOKESMAN FOR MAHMUDUL HAQUE USMANI, ONE-TIME SECRETARY-GENERAL OF NAP, READ OUT STATEMENT BY USMANI ANNOUNCING HIS AFFILIATION WITH ASGHAR KHAN'S TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL. AT SAME MEETING, OTHER LESSER FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH SMALL KARACHI REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS JOINED TEHRIK ALSO. IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT USMANI SAID HE BELIEVED RULE OF LAW ALONE COULD SAVE PAKISTAN AND DEMOCRACY COULD BE PROTECTED ONLY UNDER LEADERSHIP OF ASGHAR KHAN. USMANI'S STATEMENT ALSO APPEALED TO ALL DEMOCRATIC AND PATRIOTIC PEOPLE TO JOIN TEHRIK, ASGHAR, PRESENT AT THE MEETING, WELCOMED USMANI AND HIS PROGRESSIVE FOLLOWERS TO PARTY AND EXPRESSED HOPE THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ADDITION TO TEHRIK'S STRENGTH WOULD HASTEN CHANGE OF PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL SETUP.

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2. ALSO ON JULY 26 TEHRIK SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED ASGHAR HAD BEEN SHOT AT EARLY AFTERNOON SAME DAY IN BRITTO ROAD AREA AND EXPRESSED SUSPICION ASSAILANTS WERE MEMBERS OF FEDERAL SECURITY FORCES. KARACHI DISTRICT MAGISTRATE ISSUED OFFICIAL CATEGORICAL DENIAL ANY SHOOTING HAD TAKEN PLACE. ASGHAR KHAN REPORTEDLY ALSO MET JULY 26 FOR 2 HOURS WITH SARDAR ATTAULAH MENGAL FOR WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION. LATER IN DAY MENGAL, SPEAKING TO NAP WORKERS, LAUDED ASGHAR KHAN'S VIOLATION OF SECTION 144. RECEPTION FOR ASGHAR KHAN PLANNED BY TEHRIK PARTY WORKERS FOR AFTERNOON JULY 27 AT LOCAL HOTEL HAS BEEN CANCELLED BECAUSE HOTEL MANAGEMENT REPORTEDLY SERVED STRIKE NOTICE BY STAFF. SPECIAL CONTINGENTS OF POLICE HAVE BEEN POSTED NEAR METROPOLE HOTEL WHERE ASGHAR'S TRAVELLING COMPANIONS, MIAN MAHMUD ALI KASURI AND MALIK GHULAM JILANI, ARE STAYING.

3. COMMENT: USMANI'S AFFILIATION WITH TEHRIK HAS BEEN RUMORED IN KARACHI FOR SOME TIME AND COMES AS NO SURPRISE. USMANI, LONG ALIENATED FROM MUCH OF KARACHI REFUGEE COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF HIS NAP TIES, HAS BEEN CONCENTRATING ON ESTABLISHING HIS REFUGEE CREDENTIALS SINCE 1972 SIND LANGUAGE DISTURBANCES WHICH FOLLOWED HIS DEFECTION FROM NAP. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW SUCCESSFUL HE HAS BEEN IN THESE EFFORTS. AMOUNT OF REFUGEE SUPPORT HE BRINGS WITH HIM TO TEHRIK IS UNCERTAIN. LIKELY THAT ALLEGED ASSAULT ON ASGHAR WILL BECOME ANOTHER ENTRY IN HIS GROWING LIST OF COMPLAINTS OF GOVERNMENT HARASSMENT. CANCELLATION OF JULY 27 RECEPTION COULD WELL BE RESULT OF GOVERNMENT SUGGESTION, WHICH WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH PETTY HARRASSMENTS OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS HAVE SUFFERED RECENTLY IN KARACHI.

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